

Philosophizing and Democracy: The North, Central, and the South

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Abstract

In recent years, democracy in the Philippines has become a contentious subject, particularly considering Rodrigo Duterte's presidency, marking the first leader hailing from Mindanao. Scholars representing the South (Mindanao), Central (Visayas), and North (Luzon) have contributed their perspectives on democracy, employing philosophical inquiry to reframe the discourse. This approach is rooted in their scholarly endeavors, aimed at uncovering the multifaceted issues surrounding Philippine democracy. These scholarly endeavors have both broadened the perspectives of many Filipinos and engendered divisions in sentiment and viewpoint. Recognizing that scholars may approach their work with personal biases shaped by individual experiences, this paper contends that dismissing their contributions as mere partiality would diminish the true essence of philosophizing. Consequently, this paper endeavors to provide a meaningful interpretation and exposition of the comprehensive arguments posited by selected scholars from Mindanao, Visayas, and Luzon, as they engage in philosophical discourse on Philippine democracy. The paper posits that engaging in philosophical inquiry regarding Philippine democracy serves as a crucible for Filipino progress, envisioning them as the vanguards of the nation's future. It maintains that without such intellectual endeavors, the nation risks stagnating and perpetuating the enduring wounds of historical social, economic, cultural, and political divisions.

Keywords: Democracy, Philosophizing, Radical Politics, Rodrigo Duterte, Unity

Introduction

In recent times, the discussion surrounding democracy in the Philippines has evolved into a subject of intense debate, particularly in the wake of Rodrigo Duterte's presidency—a significant milestone as he emerged as the first leader originating from Mindanao.¹ Scholars representing different regions of the archipelago, including the Southern region of Mindanao, the Central region of Visayas, and the Northern region of Luzon, have actively contributed their insights on democracy. Employing the tools of philosophical inquiry, these scholars have endeavored to reframe the discourse surrounding this crucial facet of Philippine governance.

This philosophical approach finds its roots in the scholarly pursuits of these individuals, as they delve into the intricate web of issues that define Philippine democracy. Their efforts have yielded a dual effect: on one hand, they have expanded the horizons of thought for many Filipinos, while on the other; they have sparked divisions in sentiment and viewpoint, highlighting the complexity of the subject matter.

Acknowledging the potential for scholars to approach their work with inherent biases shaped by personal experiences, this paper contends that dismissing their contributions as mere partiality would be an oversimplification. Instead, it posits that their distinct perspectives enrich the discourse, adding depth and nuance to the ongoing dialogue on Philippine democracy. Consequently, this paper sets out to offer a comprehensive examination and exposition of the intricate arguments presented by selected scholars hailing from Mindanao, Visayas, and Luzon, as they engage in profound philosophical discourse on the nature of Philippine democracy.

Furthermore, this paper advances the notion that engaging in philosophical inquiry regarding Philippine democracy serves as a crucible for Filipino progress. It envisions the citizens as the vanguards of the nation's future, emphasizing that without such intellectual endeavors, the nation may risk stagnation, perpetuating the enduring scars of historical, social, economic, cultural, and political divisions.

¹ C.R. Maboloc, "President Rodrigo Duterte and the Birth of Radical Democracy in the Philippines," *International Journal of Politics and Security* 2, no. 3 (May 2020): 116-134.

Selected Scholars/Philosophers from the North, Central, and the South

This section aims to provide a detailed overview of the scholars and philosophers from the northern (Luzon), central (Visayas) and southern (Mindanao) regions. It will include their academic backgrounds, areas of expertise, and affiliations, as gleaned from the gathered data. These selected scholars/philosophers are chosen for their significant contributions to the discourse on democracy, particularly within the context of Rodrigo Duterte's presidency. Their scholarly pursuits directly address the complexities and challenges posed by this political era in the Philippines.

In the southern part, we have Dr. Christopher Ryan Maboloc, a distinguished Associate Professor at Ateneo de Davao University – Davao City obtained his doctorate in philosophy with the highest honors from the University of San Carlos.² His academic achievements underscore his expertise in the field. Moreover, radical democracy was a novel concept in Philippine academia, particularly in conference discussions, until emerging scholars from the Southern region pioneered its use as a framework for analyzing President Rodrigo Duterte's ascent to power. This shift began in 2017 when Dr. Christopher Ryan Maboloc secured a research grant from Ateneo de Davao University for his project, *“Radical Democracy in the Time of Duterte.”* Following the conclusion of this research, numerous papers were published in the works of Arambala,³ Labastin,⁴ and scholars from the Visayas region.

In the central part, we have Dr. Regletto Aldrich Imbong, he holds the position of Associate Professor in the Political Science Program at the University of the Philippines Cebu City, a distinguished constituent of the Philippines' premier academic institution, the University of the Philippines.⁵ Within his academic role, he imparts

² Ibid.

³ G. Arambala, “Radical Leadership in Post-Parojinog Ozamiz Politics,” *European Journal of Research* 11, no. 12 (2018): 75-89.

⁴ B. Labastin, “Two Faces of Dutertismo: Two Visions of Democracy in the Philippines,” *Social Ethics Society Journal of Applied Philosophy*, Special Issue (2018): 31-54.

⁵ R.A. Imbong, J. Imbong, and P.G. Torres, “Chantal Mouffe on the Radical Politics of Rodrigo Duterte,” *PHAVISMINDA Journal* 21, Special Issue (2022): 88-117.

knowledge in the philosophy of technology and political philosophy to undergraduate students, while also delving into philosophical foundations of education at the graduate level. His published research covers a spectrum of topics, including neoliberalism, neocolonialism, technology, authoritarianism, fascism, and Marxism.

In the northern part, we have Professor Randolph “Randy” S. David, a prominent Filipino figure who wears multiple hats as a journalist, television host, and sociologist.⁶ He holds the esteemed title of professor emeritus of sociology at the University of the Philippines–Diliman, Quezon City where he has made significant contributions to academia. Randy shares his insights through a weekly newspaper column in the Philippine Daily Inquirer and serves as a board advisor for ABS-CBN Corporation. Despite starting his doctoral studies at the University of Manchester, he chose to remain in the Philippines during the martial law era under President Ferdinand Marcos, demonstrating his commitment to his country. Randy’s diverse roles and dedication have made him a respected and influential figure in the Philippines.

The information about these scholars is compiled from available internet data, along with details about their respective fields of expertise. The intention is not to draw comparisons between their achievements or delve into their personal lives. Instead, this information serves as a background that underpins the positions argued in this paper. The richness of their ideas concerning Philippine issues, specifically their modest contributions to the state of democracy during Duterte’s regime, forms the crux of the discussion. By focusing on their insights and expertise, this paper aims to explore the diverse perspectives and analyses these scholars bring to the forefront, shedding light on their valuable contributions to the discourse surrounding the challenges faced by democracy in the context of Duterte’s leadership.

Historical Background: The State of Philippine Democracy

During the period of Spanish rule from 1565 to 1898, the Philippines faced significant challenges in establishing a democratic system. The Spanish governance, in collaboration with a local elite,

⁶ R. David, “The making of a tyrant”, INQUIRER. NET, [Article online] Available from <https://opinion.inquirer.net/143818/the-making-of-a-tyrant>, accessed on October 31, 2023.

hindered the growth of democratic ideals by favoring the privileged class, creating a divide between the powerful and the ordinary citizens. Unfair rules, heavy taxes, and limited access to education intensified the gap between the rich and the poor, making it challenging for democratic principles to take root.⁷ The people's resistance through movements and uprisings demonstrated a desire for self-governance. The imposition of foreign governance further complicated the establishment of local democratic systems. Despite these obstacles, the Filipino people's perseverance laid the foundation for future struggles, eventually leading to the Philippines' journey to becoming an independent republic in 1946.⁸

Currently, the democratic system in the Philippines is grappling with the issue of elite democracy, a problem deeply rooted in the country's historical past.⁹ Arambala argues that the remnants of historical practices, particularly the support of the Spanish colonial authorities for the privileged class known as the *Illustrados*, have persisted, contributing to ongoing injustices in society.¹⁰ This historical influence has shaped modern Philippine politics, resulting in what is now termed an "elite democracy." In this system, a selected group of individuals or families, often with significant economic and political influence, concentrate political power.¹¹ The consequences of this elite democracy are visible in policies and decisions that tend to favor the interests of the wealthy, exacerbating social inequalities. The concept of political dynasties, where power is concentrated within specific families, further exemplifies this elite-driven political structure.¹² The enduring challenge lies in breaking away from this historical pattern and fostering a more inclusive democratic system that addresses the pervasive injustices within Filipino society.

⁷ J. C. Teehankee and C. A. Calimbahin, "Mapping the Philippines' Defective Democracy," *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 47, no.2 (2020): 97-125.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁹ B. B. Brillo, "A Theoretical Review on Philippines' Policymaking: The Weak State-Elitist Framework and the Pluralist Perspective," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 39, no. 1 (March 2011): 54-76.

¹⁰ G. Arambala, "The Return of the Political: Chantal Mouffe and Ozamiz City Politics," *International Journal of Politics and Security* 1, no. 2 (2019): 56-81.

¹¹ R. M. Caplis, "The Philippines Political Elites", [Article online] Available from 10.13140/RG.2.1.3940.1686., accessed on November 1, 2023.

¹² T. S. E. Tadem and E. C. Tadem, "Political dynasties in the Philippines: Persistent patterns, perennial problems," *Southeast Asia Research* 2, no. 3 (2016): 382-340.

In the current state of Philippine democracy, there is a growing urgency among Filipinos to confront its challenges and strive for change. The prevailing issues and complexities within the democratic system are perceived by many as a kind of venom, toxic, and detrimental to the well-being of the nation. This sentiment has ignited a collective desire among Filipinos for a new system that can emancipate them from the grip of the old.¹³ The call for change is driven by the recognition that the existing democratic structures may not be effectively addressing the needs and aspirations of the people. Filipinos are yearning for a transformative shift that goes beyond superficial changes, seeking a replacement for the current system that can bring about genuine emancipation and empower the broader population. This desire for a new system reflects a collective hope for a more inclusive, transparent, and responsive form of governance that can navigate the challenges of the present and lay the foundation for a better future.

A radical shift is deemed crucial, especially when the leader of the nation is seen as someone embodying the aspirations that many Filipinos have longed for. This yearning for change became evident when a candidate from Mindanao ran for the presidency, capturing the hopes and dreams of countless Filipinos.¹⁴ The substantial support garnered during the election reflected a collective desire for transformative change in the prevailing state of democracy. It signified a call for a radical shift away from the existing elite democracy, emphasizing the need for a new and inclusive system. The votes cast were not just ballots; they were symbols of hope, representing the Filipino people's belief in the potential of a leader to bring about meaningful change. This pursuit of a radical shift is fueled by the recognition that the current state of democracy falls short of addressing the diverse needs and aspirations of the population. The election became a platform where Filipinos expressed their yearning for leadership that could break away from traditional norms, presenting an opportunity for a more inclusive and responsive form of governance to replace the prevailing elite democracy.

¹³ S. Sable, "Democratizing democracy in the Philippines", *Conference Paper* 2016 pp. 1-22. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.12797.56801.

¹⁴ C. R. Maboloc, "Situating the Mindanao agenda in the Radical Politics of President Duterte," *Iqra* 4 (2017): 3-24.

The Rise of Radical Democracy

Radical democracy finds its roots in the fundamental notion that traditional political structures and practices often fall short in addressing deep-seated issues and disparities within a society.¹⁵ It emerges from the belief that a more profound transformation is necessary to challenge and reshape existing norms that may contribute to problems such as inequality, corruption, and inefficiency. At its core, radical democracy is grounded in a commitment to substantial and systemic change, often advocating for a departure from established political frameworks.¹⁶ This concept recognizes that incremental adjustments may not suffice to address the complexities of societal challenges. Instead, it calls for a reevaluation and restructuring of power dynamics, emphasizing inclusivity, equal representation, and responsiveness to the diverse needs of the population. The roots of radical democracy extend from a critical examination of the limitations of conventional political systems, aiming to create a more just, participatory, and equitable form of governance.

The ascent of Duterte to power, often perceived as unconventional and interpreted by scholars as a radical shift, reflects a departure from the conventional norms of political elite governance.¹⁷ Duterte's ideology challenges the established political order, questioning traditional practices associated with the privileged few. This departure is considered radical because it signifies a break from the usual patterns of governance, introducing unconventional methods and rhetoric.¹⁸ Duterte's approach is seen as a challenge to the existing political landscape, aiming to dismantle entrenched structures that may contribute to issues like corruption and inequality. Maboloc argues that his unconventional methods and strongman politics represent a form of radicalism, not necessarily in the traditional ideological sense, but in the sense of challenging established norms and practices.¹⁹ The core of Duterte's ideology lies

¹⁵ C. R. Maboloc, "The Predatory State and Radical Politics: The case of the Philippines," *Journal of ASEAN Studies* 7, no. 2 (2019): 161-175.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 167.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 165.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

in the rejection of elite democracy, advocating for a more inclusive and responsive form of governance that prioritizes the needs and voices of the broader population over traditional political elites. This interpretation underscores the radical nature of Duterte's political agenda in the Philippine context.

However, amidst the radical shift brought about by Duterte's leadership, he has garnered critics, including scholars, who label him as a "false messiah."²⁰ This term suggests a divergence between the anticipated positive change promised during his election and the actual governance that unfolded. Critics argue that Duterte's policies, such as the controversial war on drugs, exhibit discrepancies between rhetoric and reality. The "false messiah" critique points to perceived shortcomings, including concerns about human rights issues, controversial decision-making, and authoritarian tendencies.²¹ While some segments of the population applaud his unorthodox approach, the designation of a "false messiah" underscores a critical perspective, contending that Duterte may not have lived up to the transformative promises associated with his leadership, as articulated during the election campaign.

Duterte's war on drugs and the associated human rights concerns have thrust the Philippines into the global spotlight, evoking both condemnation and support. Internationally, the campaign has stirred controversy due to allegations of extrajudicial killings and human rights abuses.²² Critics argue that these actions violate fundamental human rights principles, sparking concern from various countries and human rights organizations. However, domestically, a significant portion of the population finds pleasure in Duterte's strong stance against drugs and corruption. Unlike before, when these issues were rampant and seemingly unchecked, Duterte's assertive approach resonates with many Filipinos who perceive it as a decisive measure to combat deeply rooted problems. The pleasure derived from the majority reflects a sentiment that the government is taking tangible

²⁰ S. Parmanand, "Duterte as the macho messiah: Chauvinist populism and the feminization of human rights in the Philippines," *Review of Women's Studies* 29, no.2 (2020): 1-30.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

²² K. Barera, "The Philippines' War on Drugs (Read: The Poor): The Erosion of the Rule of Law and the Violation of Children's Human Rights," *Working Paper Series* 8, no. 1 (2019): 6-44.

action to address issues that directly affect the safety and well-being of the population.²³

The Duterte Presidency: The Divisive Sentiments and Views of the North, Central, and the South

Duterte's unpredictable political strategy has sown confusion among ordinary Filipinos and within academic circles. This confusion has sparked the rise of scholars from diverse regions like Mindanao, Visayas, and Luzon. The intricacies of Duterte's political satire have become a hot topic, particularly in academic discussions aiming to comprehend the nuances of his governance. The unpredictability in Duterte's approach has prompted scholars to delve into the complexities of his rhetoric, decision-making, and the underlying political philosophy.²⁴ This regional diversity among scholars underscores the widespread impact and interest in understanding the multifaceted dimensions of Duterte's politics, contributing to a rich tapestry of academic discourse. The unpredictable nature of Duterte's strategies has not only fueled debates among scholars but has also permeated public discourse, reflecting the challenges in deciphering the underlying motives and implications of his governance.

Christopher Ryan Maboloc, a prominent scholar/philosopher from Mindanao, offers a perspective on Duterte's politics through the lens of radicalism, influenced by Chantal Mouffe's ideas. Maboloc contends that Duterte's political stance signifies a significant shift from the historically rooted and current state of politics, which has been dominated by the elite.²⁵ Drawing on Mouffe's radical political theory, Maboloc likely emphasizes the departure from traditional norms and the challenging of established power structures. This interpretation suggests that Duterte's governance, according to Maboloc, introduces a form of radical politics that seeks to disrupt existing political paradigms.²⁶ The influence of Mouffe's radical

²³ G. Dano, "Are Filipinos Really Hate Duterte's Leadership?" *Indonesian Journal of Education and Social Science* 3, no. 1 (2024): 53-56.

²⁴ N. Curato, "The Duterte Reader: Critical Essays on Rodrigo Duterte's Early Presidency", *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints*, Vol. 66, No. 4, 2018 pp. 542-545.

²⁵ C. R. Maboloc, "President Rodrigo Duterte and the Birth of Radical Democracy in the Philippines," *International Journal of Politics and Security*.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

political thought may indicate an exploration of alternative approaches to democracy and governance, aligning with Maboloc's perspective on Duterte's departure from elite-dominated politics.

This emphasis was further elaborated by Maboloc when he discusses President Duterte's political language, emphasizing the significance of emotions in the political sphere.²⁷ It explores how Duterte's use of language, marked by anger and defiance, is a deliberate strategy to underscore the value of emotions in advocating for change. The understanding suggests that this approach resonates particularly with the Bisaya people, portraying their struggle for recognition and political autonomy. Maboloc argues that the term "Bisaya na pud" reflects a call for pride and recognition, rooted in a historical hegemonic divide.²⁸ The use of language, according to Maboloc, becomes a persuasive tool in expressing sentiments against elitism and societal neglect. Overall, Maboloc delves into the role of language in conveying dissent, identity, and the political aspirations of the Bisaya people under Duterte's leadership.²⁹

Maboloc's framework for radicalizing Duterte has influenced numerous scholars in Mindanao, including Arambala. The impact of Maboloc's perspective extends to scholars who share an interest in redefining and understanding Duterte's political ideology and actions. Arambala, influenced by Maboloc, applies this framework in his analysis of Philippine democracy's historical challenges, emphasizing the need for radical shifts, particularly exemplified in cases like Ozamis City and Police Chief Inspector Jovie Espenido's leadership.³⁰ Arambala's point centers on the historical narrative of Philippine democracy, emphasizing the enduring presence of oppressive forces, corruption, and the role of local warlords perpetuating these issues. He contends that corruption and oppression thrive due to these warlords, who enforce their power through violence, distorting the democratic framework for their benefit.³¹ In the case of Ozamis City, a family's prolonged rule symbolizes the failure of democracy, impacting

²⁷ C. R. Maboloc, "President Duterte's grammar of dissent", *INQUIRER.NET*, [Article online] Available from <https://opinion.inquirer.net/115226/president-dutertes-grammar-dissent>, accessed on November 1, 2023.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ G. Arambala, "Radical Leadership in Post-Parojinog Ozamiz Politics," *European Journal of Research*.

³¹ Ibid., 80.

the lives of the city's residents. Arambala argues that a radical shift, exemplified by Police Chief Inspector Jovie Espenido's leadership, becomes crucial.³² Despite criticisms labeling Espenido as authoritarian, Arambala asserts that radical measures are necessary to dismantle entrenched structures of corruption and oppression. The aim is not merely to challenge the status quo but to disrupt and uproot the decayed system, paving the way for a new societal direction focused on improving people's lives.³³ The philosophical assessment of Espenido's leadership follows Chantal Mouffe's radical democracy paradigm, suggesting a need for transformative change in societal structures.

Further, Labastin's readings on Maboloc puts more emphasis on Maboloc's radical politics which underscores the assertion that "undemocratic ways" are, according to Maboloc, crucial for disrupting the existing political order and progressing toward a more substantive and transformative form of democracy.³⁴ Labastin argued that this perspective challenges the conventional notion that strictly adhering to established democratic processes may not be sufficient for addressing deeply rooted issues within the political system.³⁵ The latter is referred to his other readings on Randy David's which highlights that David's perspective implies a call for political actors to operate within the established democratic process. According to Labastin, David's view may inadvertently align with the vision suggesting that any effort to strengthen democracy should strictly adhere to formal processes.³⁶ This stance, as perceived by Labastin, could indicate a more cautious and process-oriented approach, potentially reinforcing the existing political structures. Labastin's analysis thus characterizes David's reading as advocating for a methodical adherence to democratic procedures, emphasizing the need to work within established frameworks to bring about democratic substantiation. Labastin sees this work of Maboloc and David as two faces of Duterteism.³⁷

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ B. Labastin, "Two Faces of Duterteism: Two Visions of Democracy in the Philippines," *Social Ethics Society Journal of Applied Philosophy*, pp. 31.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., 53.

Hence, the point of David concerning the above arguments presented by Labastin. David analyzes Rodrigo Duterte's political style, drawing parallels with historical fascist movements.³⁸ Duterte's theatrical approach, according to David, emphasizes emotion over rational ideas, creating an aesthetic experience rather than a rational application of political philosophy.³⁹ David explores the potential emergence of "Dutertismo" in the Philippines, comparing it to fascism in Europe. He argues that Duterte's leadership relies on a mystical union with the nation's historic destiny, not a coherent doctrine.⁴⁰ He suggests that Duterte's movement is driven by collective anger and despair, challenging traditional political norms. Moreover, for David, President Rodrigo Duterte's method of governance, characterized by the systematic use of state power to intimidate dissenters, critics, and those he perceives as not taking him seriously.⁴¹ David examines how this approach is evident not only in the anti-drug campaign but also in silencing political opposition, media organizations, and even foreign individuals involved in political activities. He draws parallels with historical figures like Adolf Hitler, highlighting the reliance on fear, force, and cruelty as tools of governance.

Further, Imbong criticizes the current scholarship on radical politics led by Christopher Ryan Maboloc, asserting that it misappropriated the post-Marxist political project of Mouffe and Laclau.⁴² Imbong argues that Duterte's governance style contradicts the fundamental principles of radical democratic politics, emphasizing how Duterte's regime undermines and attacks the very institutions and processes essential for the flourishing of liberal democracy, a key component of the radical democratic project.⁴³ Imbong contends that under Duterte, the conditions necessary for radical democracy are lost, rendering it impossible. In the paper "Chantal Mouffe on the Radical Politics of Rodrigo Duterte," Regletto Aldrich Imbong, Jerry Imbong, and Patrick Gerard Torres argue that the current scholarship on radical politics, particularly as it relates to Duterte, is a misappropriation of the post-Marxist political project of Chantal

³⁸ R. David, "The making of a tyrant," *INQUIRER. NET*, [Article online]

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² R. A. Imbong, J. Imbong, and P. G. Torres, "Chantal Mouffe on the Radical Politics of Rodrigo Duterte," *PHAVISMINDA Journal*, 88.

⁴³ Ibid.

Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau.⁴⁴ They criticize the work of Christopher Ryan Maboloc and others for failing to properly understand the theoretical foundations of Mouffe and Laclau's ideas and for applying them inappropriately to the context of Duterte's regime.

The authors argue that the idea of radical democratic politics, which is central to Mouffe and Laclau's work, requires the radicalization of liberal democracy. However, they contend that Duterte's regime has undermined and attacked the institutions and processes of liberal democracy, making it impossible to achieve radical democratic politics.⁴⁵ They argue that the style of governance and regime of Duterte cannot be properly understood through the lens of Mouffe and Laclau's work, and that attempts to do so are misguided and potentially harmful. Overall, Imbong, Imbong, and Torres criticize the scholarship on radical politics concerning Duterte for failing to properly engage with Mouffe and Laclau's ideas and for misapplying them to a context in which they do not fit.

Philosophizing and the Contested Views on the Duterte Presidency

Throughout history, Filipino sentiments have been marked by divisions, a reflection of disparities in economic, political, and cultural dominance. Economic inequalities, characterized by wealth concentration and uneven development, contribute to class distinctions. Political power struggles and leadership changes shape divergent opinions, as administrations implement varying policies. The country's cultural richness, stemming from a history of diverse indigenous cultures and external influences, adds to the complexity of perspectives. These divisions, evident in regionalism, class struggles, and ideological differences, persist in response to historical events and contemporary issues. Even in academia, views on Duterte's leadership are divided among scholars, reflecting a diversity of perspectives and analyses. Different scholars bring their unique lenses to interpret Duterte's political strategies, governance style, and impact on Philippine society. The academic discourse encompasses debates on issues such as authoritarianism, radical politics, and the compatibility of Duterte's regime with democratic principles. These varying

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

viewpoints highlight the complexity of assessing political figures and systems, as scholars grapple with interpreting the multifaceted aspects of Duterte's presidency within the context of Philippine history and political dynamics.

However, and certainly, the narratives presented by scholars from Mindanao, Visayas, and Luzon should not be perceived as indicative of divided sentiments; instead, they contribute to a healthy conversation and philosophical exploration. Emphasizing this philosophical discourse allows Filipinos to engage in a thoughtful dialogue, fostering awareness and solidarity in their aspirations for unity. By delving into the nuances of the political landscape and understanding the complexities of their situation, individuals become more informed and better equipped to navigate the diverse perspectives shaping the discourse on governance and societal structures. This intellectual exchange contributes to a richer understanding of the broader political context in the Philippines. Indeed, the diverse philosophical perspectives emerging from Mindanao, Visayas, and Luzon serve as manifestations of the Filipino aspiration for a society characterized by unity. Despite the varying ideologies, the shared desire for a harmonious and united nation underlines the common thread that binds Filipinos in their pursuit of a cohesive and inclusive society. The recognition and engagement with diverse philosophies contribute to a collective understanding that fosters the overarching goal of national unity among the Filipino people.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the discourse on democracy in the Philippines, particularly under Rodrigo Duterte's presidency, has been shaped by the diverse perspectives of scholars/philosophers from Mindanao, Visayas, and Luzon. The philosophical inquiry into Duterte's governance, influenced by scholars like Christopher Ryan Maboloc, Regletto Aldrich Imbong, Randy David, and others, has added depth to the understanding of Philippine democracy. The rise of radical democracy as a concept, rooted in the works of Chantal Mouffe, has been both embraced and criticized in the context of Duterte's leadership. The divided sentiments among scholars and in Filipino society at large reflect historical disparities in economic, political, and

cultural dominance. However, it is essential to view these narratives not as signs of division but as contributions to a healthy conversation and philosophical exploration. This discourse, emphasizing unity through awareness and solidarity, allows Filipinos to navigate the complexities of their political landscape and work towards a more inclusive and responsive democratic future. In essence, the diverse philosophies emerging from different regions manifest the Filipino aspiration for a united and cohesive society, contributing to a richer understanding of the nation's political context.

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